

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 5, 1969

Dear Colleague:

1. We urge you to participate in the special orders to be held this afternoon, Wednesday, November 5, either in person or by submitting a statement with copies to be available to the press.

2. We are publicly issuing today the enclosed statement and resolution. We hope that you will join with us in co-sponsoring the resolution which will be introduced Monday, November 10. If you will co-sponsor the resolution, please call Judy McFadden, Extension 7617, by 12:00 noon Monday.

Sincerely,

George Brown, Jr., M. C. /s/

Donald M. Fraser, M. C. /s/

Phillip Burton, M. C. /s/

Robert W. Kastenmeier, M. C. /s/

John Conyers, Jr., M.C. /s/

Abner J. Mikva, M. C. /s/

Bob Eckhardt, M. C. /s/

Benjamin S. Rosenthal, M. C. /s/

Don Edwards, M. C. /s/

William F. Ryan, M. C. /s/

STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT'S SPEECH OF NOVEMBER 3, 1969

Monday night the President picked up a fallen standard, and proclaimed Nixon's War. On a closer look, the war he proposes to continue is dismayingly close to Johnson's War: a commitment to the pursuit in Vietnam of unattainable ends, open-ended in time, cost, and the use of American firepower against Vietnamese.

The fundamental flaw is in the narrowing of the choice to two positions: "precipitate" withdrawal or an indefinite commitment to prop up militarily the present government in Saigon (with the pious hope of transferring the ground war ultimately to the South Vietnamese forces). We do not propose either, and we find the President's Vietnam policy tragically ill-conceived for three principal reasons:

1. Short of destroying the entire country and its people, we cannot eliminate the enemy forces in Vietnam by military means which even President Nixon concedes; "military victory" is no longer the U.S. objective. What the President fails to recognize is that the opposing leadership cannot be coerced by any U. S. strategy into making the kinds of concessions currently demanded.
2. Past U. S. promises to the Vietnamese people are not served by prolonging our inconclusive and highly destructive military activity in Vietnam. It must not be prolonged merely on demand of the Saigon government, whose interest in preserving its status and power is served only by continuing the war with American support, not by settling it, and whose capacity to survive on its own must finally be tested, regardless of outcome.
3. The importance to the United States national interest of the future political complexion of South Vietnam does not justify the human, political, and material cost: a war which divides our people, brutalizes our minds, confounds our economy, and brings untold tragedy to hundreds of thousands of American families.

It is for these reasons that we conclude that United States forces in South Vietnam should be systematically withdrawn on an orderly and fixed schedule -- neither precipitate nor contingent on factors beyond our control -- to extend

only over such period of time as shall be necessary to (a) provide for the safety of U. S. forces, (b) secure the release of American prisoners of war, (c) assist any Vietnamese desiring asylum, and (d) enable the U. S. to make an orderly disposition of its facilities in South Vietnam.

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RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the sense of Congress that United States forces in South Vietnam should be systematically withdrawn on an orderly and fixed schedule -- neither precipitate nor contingent on factors beyond our control -- to extend only over such period of time as shall be necessary to (a) provide for the safety of U. S. forces, (b) secure the release of American prisoners of war, (c) assist any Vietnamese desiring asylum, and (d) enable the U. S. to make an orderly disposition of its facilities in South Vietnam.